

**Summary of the  
NELAC Board of Directors/Committee Chairs Joint Meeting  
December 2, 1999**

The Board of Directors and the committee chairs of the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference (NELAC) convened for a joint meeting by teleconference at 1:30 p.m. on December 2, 1999. The meeting was lead by Chair Dr. Jim Pearson, Virginia Division of Consolidated Laboratories. Dr. Pearson followed the agenda previously distributed. Action items from this meeting are shown in Attachment A, incomplete action items from past meetings are shown in Attachment B and the list of participants is shown in Attachment C.

**Introduction**

The Board reviewed, requested minor changes, and approved the minutes of the November 18, 1999, Board of Directors Meeting as edited. Action items from past meetings were reviewed and status is noted in Attachment B. Additional items of interest to the Board included the status of ELAB appointments, Office of Water regulations relative to PT samples, and various meetings with EPA staff.

**AARB Charter**

Board members had been given copies of the proposed charter for the Accrediting Authority Review Board. Several editorial comments sent to Ms. Mourrain had not been received due to transmission problems; these will be re-sent. Ms. Mourrain will revise the draft charter accordingly.

**Limitations on NELAC Committee Authority**

Ms. Mourrain noted that issues from some NELAC committees have been raised that could result in official actions. She reviewed foundational advice from EPA's Office of General Council that NELAC activities be restricted to setting standards, although there are seemingly natural extensions from standard-setting into related activities. She asked that board members and committee chairs be alert to this potential issue and assist with creative options as needed.

**Standard Forms for Response to Comments**

Ms. Silky Labie introduced a system for accepting and responding to participants' comments, explaining that the Quality Systems committee has been using and refining the system during the past year. This permits comments to be submitted to the committee in a standardized process and encourages the commenter to propose desired language. She noted that this documents the committee's accountability for comments and permits a detailed historical review of the committee's decisions. There was a consensus that general use of such a system would be to NELAC's advantage: Ms. Mourrain offered to put the forms for this system on the NELAC web site for general accessibility. She also offered to supply the NELAC letterhead to committee chairs for their use with these letters.

**Additional Issues**

Dr. Brokopp reported that he expects to complete preparation of a draft response to the Air Toxics Letter in time for next week's meeting of the Board with Mr. Longest.

Ms. Sample reported on the discussions regarding Federal Agencies' exemption as secondary Accrediting Authorities. She reported that this was discussed in a recent meeting of the NELAC Federal Partners and that proposed wording is expected in the meeting minutes. Ms. Mourrain offered to distribute this information to meeting participants and board members.

Ms. Sample questioned why the approved version of Chapter One of the NELAC standards, now containing the NELAC glossary, has dropped definitions of "government laboratory" and "private laboratory" and retains a more generic definition of "laboratory". Discussion of this issue will be continued.

At Dr. Pearson's invitation, committee chairs briefed the board on issues their committee's plan to bring to the working sessions during the Fifth NELAC Interim Meeting, scheduled for December 14 - 17, 1999 at the J.W. Marriott hotel in Washington, DC.

### **Summary of NELAP Accrediting Authority meetings**

Highlights of the NELAP Accrediting Authority meetings were reviewed, noting that challenges in implementing the national program are being addressed in depth and in detail. Clarification of intent by the committees is being sought to suggest improvements in wording. Reasonable balance in interpretation of the Standards is being sought to minimize unnecessary resource expenditures.

### **New Business**

Dr. Siegelman and Ms. Doucet reviewed plans for the Fifth NELAC Interim Meeting (NELAC Vi). They will be meeting on 12/6/1999 with the J.W. Marriott convention manager to review meeting logistics. 200 pre-registrations have been received as of this date. Large-format copies of session groundrules will be posted. Templates for the closing sessions are available for chairs' review.

### **Next Meeting**

The next meeting of this board is scheduled for Tuesday, December 14, 1999 at 8:30 am prior to the opening plenary session of NELAC Vi.

**New Action Items  
NELAC Board of Teleconference  
December 2, 1999**

Item No.	Action	Status
1	Ms. Mourrain will continue processing of AARB charter	Completed
2	Ms. Mourrain will post the files for comments' processing on the NELAC web site.	
3	Ms. Mourrain will supply NELAC letterhead to committee chairs for use in processing comments.	Completed
4	Ms. Mourrain will distribute recent Federal Partners' wording for exemption of federal agencies as secondary accrediting authorities is addressed.	Completed
5	Ms. Sample will lead further discussion on the definition of laboratory.	

**Incomplete Action Items from Past Teleconferences**

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Status</b>
01/11/99	Committee Chairs are to prepare "Frequently Asked Questions" for posting on the website. They are to submit these to Dr. Irene Ronning.	On-going
02/04/99	Ms. Mourrain, Ms. Batterton, Ms. Sample and Dr. Hartwig will work on developing a training program for the Committee Chairs. Material was updated in response to comments. Ms. Sample and Ms. Labie will review.	Completed  On-going
05/27/99	Dr. Jackson will prepare another letter to the Assistant Administrator for Water regarding their PT program.	Completed
07/31/99	Dr. Ken Jackson will draft a letter to the Editors of the Environmental Laboratory Washington Report pointing out the inaccuracies in the ACIL article.	On-going
8/27/99	Committee Liaison should make it a priority that their committees have a full complement of members.	Completed
8/27/99	Board members are to study the Draft AARB charter and be prepared to discuss it in detail next month.	Completed
9/23/99	Dr. Jackson will draft a policy for responding to future offers of NELAC-associated activities at national meetings.	On-going
10/28/99	Ms. Finazzo will coordinate contact of EPA regional tribal coordinators to determine extent of existing tribal environmental programs, and interest in NELAC	On-going
10/28/99	Ms. Mourrain will provide a copy of the GIES pilot training proposal to EPA upper management for approval.	Completed
10/28/99	Dr. Jackson and Dr. Pearson will draft a letter to the states not currently participating on committees to solicit participation.	Completed
11/18/99	Ms. Mourrain will contact EPA lawyers about WPI proposal to see if we can accept.	Completed
11/18/99	Board will notify nominees to the GIES training to see if available and interested.	Dr. Pearson has contacted all nominees and is awaiting some responses
11/18/99	Dr. Pearson will contact Henry Longest to set up meeting with Board.	Completed
11/18/99	Ms. Mourrain will send Ms. Labie's Response to Comments forms to Committee Chairs for comment.	Completed
11/18/99	Ms. Mourrain will contact Quality Systems Committee to add text to FAQ response number 2	Complete

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Status</b>
11/18/99	Ms. Mourrain will develop a policy for response to conflicting requirements in the standards.	Ongoing
11/18/99	Dr. Jackson will draft letter to OW for Dr. Pearson's signature	Completed; draft reviewed & finalized. A meeting of the NELAC Board with C. Daughtry has been arranged

**List of Participants  
Board of Directors Teleconference  
December 2, 1999**

Name	Affiliation	Telephone Numbers
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